

Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

§ 37.13

§ 37.7 Authority to request service.

Proof of the interest of an applicant involved in the request for service, or of the authority of any person applying for the service on behalf of another may be required, at the discretion of the reviewing official.

§ 37.8 Financial interest of official.

No auditor or other Department official shall review any programs or documents concerning a certification program in which the official is directly or indirectly financially interested.

§ 37.9 Access to establishments or records; record retention.

The applicant shall cause records and documents, with respect to which service is requested, to be made easily accessible for examination. Supervisors and other employees of the Department responsible for maintaining uniformity and accuracy of service shall have access to all parts of establishments covered by approved applications for service under the regulations, during normal business hours or during periods of production, for the purpose of evaluating systems or processes associated with an approved certification program. Records and documents shall be retained for at least 5 years beyond the date of the applicant's request for service.

§ 37.10 Official assessment.

Official assessment of an applicant's certification program shall be granted upon successful completion of a two-step review process, as provided for in § 37.2.

(a) *Documentation approval.* Documentation approval will be provided by the Branch Chief regarding the adequacy of an applicant's quality manual with respect to ISO Guide 65 requirements upon completion of an adequacy audit by the auditors.

(b) *Program assessment.* Assessment of a certification program will be issued by the Branch Chief by written memorandum or other approved method of assessment upon successful completion of an onsite audit conducted by the auditors of an applicant's organic certification program ensuring that the provisions of the applicant's quality manual have been implemented and

that the applicant's certification program complies with the requirements of ISO Guide 65.

(c) *Disapproval and corrections.* An applicant determined not to meet applicable assessment requirements shall be provided by the Branch Chief with a written summary of observed program deficiencies. The applicant may appeal such a determination in accordance with the provisions of § 37.13 or implement required corrective action. After completion of the corrective action, the applicant may contact the Branch Chief to schedule another audit for assessment.

§ 37.11 Publication of program assessment status.

(a) The names of assessed certifying agencies shall be posted for public reference on the Livestock and Seed Program's website at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/>. Such postings shall include: certifier's name and contact information; referenced specification or standard(s) covered under the scope of assessment; effective date of assessment; and control number(s) of official certificate(s), as applicable.

(b) The names of assessed certifying agencies posted on the Livestock and Seed Program's website may be removed from the website upon suspension or termination of assessment for noncompliance with the regulations pursuant to § 37.13.

§ 37.12 Reassessment.

Approved certification programs shall be subject to periodic reassessment to ensure ongoing compliance with the regulations, including the requirements of ISO Guide 65. The frequency of such reassessment shall be based on the relative risk associated with the certification program's integrity, as determined by the Branch Chief.

§ 37.13 Suspension or denial of program assessment; appeals and termination.

(a) *Suspension or denial of assessment.* When a review of a certification program by auditors finds noncompliance with the regulations, including the requirements of ISO Guide 65, the Branch Chief may suspend or deny assessment

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until subsequent audits show the non-compliance has been corrected.

(b) *Appeals.* Appeals of adverse decisions by an auditor or the Branch Chief may be made in writing to the Livestock and Seed Program Deputy Administrator at Room 2092-South, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–0249.

(c) *Termination.* If noncompliance with the regulations remains uncorrected beyond a reasonable amount of time, as determined by the Livestock and Seed Program Deputy Administrator, an application may be rejected or program assessment terminated.

(1) *Procedure.* Actions under this subparagraph concerning rejection of an application or termination of assessment shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Practice Governing Formal Adjudicatory Proceedings Instituted by the Secretary Under Various Statutes set forth in §§1.130 through 1.151 of this title.

(2) [Reserved]

§ 37.14 Fees and other charges.

Fees and other charges equal as nearly as may be to the cost of the assessment services rendered under the regulations, including reassessments, shall be assessed and collected from applicants in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) *Fees for Service.* Except as otherwise provided in this section, fees-for-service shall be based on the time required to render the service provided calculated to the nearest 15-minute period, including auditor's travel, review and approval of quality manual, the conduct of the onsite audit, and time required to prepare reports and any other documents in connection with the performance of service. The base hourly rate for such service is \$42.20 per hour for 8 hours or less of work performed between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on legal holidays. The premium hourly rate for all applicants is \$47.80 per hour charged to users of the service for the hours worked in excess of 8 hours per day between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.; for the hours worked between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., Monday through Friday; and for any time worked on Saturday and Sunday, except on legal holi-

days. The holiday rate for all applicants is \$79.60 charged to users of the service for all hours worked on legal holidays.

(b) *Travel charges.* When service is requested at a place so distant from an auditor's headquarters, or place of prior assignment on circuitous routing, that a total of one-half hour or more is required for the auditor to travel to such place and back to the headquarters, or to the next place of assignment on a circuitous routing, the charge for such service shall include mileage charge administratively determined by the Department, and travel tolls, if applicable, or such travel prorated against all the applicants furnished the service involved on an equitable basis, or where the travel is made by public transportation (including hired vehicles), a fee equal to the actual cost thereof. However, the applicant will not be charged a new mileage rate without notification before the service is rendered.

(c) *Per diem charges.* When service is requested at a place away from the auditor's headquarters, the fee for such service shall include a per diem charge if the employee performing the service is paid per diem in accordance with existing travel regulations. Per diem charges to applicants will cover the same period of time for which the auditor receives per diem reimbursement. The per diem rate will be administratively determined by the Department. However, the applicant will not be charged a new per diem rate without notification before the service is rendered.

(d) *Other costs.* When costs, other than costs specified in paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section are associated with providing the services, the applicant will be charged for these costs. The amount of the costs charged will be determined administratively by the Department. However, the applicant will not be charged for such cost without notification before the service is rendered of the charge for such item of expense.

§ 37.15 Payment of fees.

Fees and other charges for service shall be paid by the applicant to the Livestock and Seed Program, AMS,